



Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: January 6, 2022

Time: 7:00-8:30PM

Location: Zoom

Minutes

Attending: Steve Poltorzycki, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Stewart Ikeda, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Beth Locke, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel, Nick Castellano, Tom Davison, Christine Noah, Tom Formicola

Absent: Sarah Morgan-Wu, Andrea Nicolay

Guests: Cecily Miller, Terry Holt, Ali Carter

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

1) ROLL CALL AND RULES OF REMOTE MEETINGS CONDUCTED DURING COVID-19

2) APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES

- Approved unanimously by all who attended the last meeting with some edits to the attendees.

3) VOLUNTEER EVENT

- On January 31st at 7:30pm on Zoom, a Community Engagement meeting will be devoted to welcoming and orienting new volunteers. Laurie is working on a power point on what ACAC does and the volunteer opportunities.
- 17 people already have asked for the link to participate to date
- Grants Committee will have a slide and will be presenting opportunities too.
- Raising the idea of breakout rooms for specific interests.
- Community engagement is the main emphasis but there are other opportunities to volunteer on committees that support community engagement.
- Also be sure to offer light lift one-day hands-on opportunities that don't require attending meetings.
- An important component of this meeting should be listening.

4) BUDGET UPDATE

- Most business donations are from last year We have not done the business appeal yet which will happen in spring.
- We have nearly \$6,000 out of \$15,000 of our projected business donations.
- We have \$28,368 in previously raised funds.
- We have already raised \$46,000 out of a projected \$50,000 in grants.
- We have already have \$110,909 out of the \$130,00 we expect between our Town allocation of \$30,000 and our fundraising goals.
- DPW contributed \$1,600 to the Climate Futures project that went directly to students and did not go through our books at all.
- ACMI will be donating a video on Chanel Thervil, so it might be a good idea to track in-kind and other contributions in our budget
- Cristin advocates for that not being part of the Treasurer's role.
- Side note: about faulty banner hardware. Ali suggests making a complaint to the Select Board office. DPW does the hanging of banners for multiple organizations.

4) FUNDRAISING UPDATE

- Cecily was just able to procure a \$15,000 grant from New England Foundation for the Arts for the Chanel Thervil Artist-in-Residency project! Huge Kudos and Appreciation!
- Ali says there is way less money floating around in the town this year. ARPA provided small amounts.
- Beth is reminding us that things are tough for the businesses so wants us to know that before we go requesting funds. Beth suggests that any requests we make are aligned with a particular project that has an economic development aspect to it. Those would be more likely to get traction.
- Metrics The Holiday stroll and all its synergies resulted in an increase in participation from 10 to 100 participants between last year and this year. And the Holiday Pop up Market was also extraordinarily successful.
- ACA-organized Open Studios attracted more than 1500 people this year.
- We don't have the funding for a big mural or a series of regular programs in Arlington Center.
- We need to look for synergies that help us to double the value of anything we offer – like a match!

5) ALI CARTER ECONOMIC GROUP Q & A

- There hasn't been a lot of funding thrown at the Heights. One of the first projects was a paint by number mural.
- Ali is trying to think of geographic equity so we want to distribute the efforts.
- While Ali is gone, Jenny is available as a resource.
- Aeronaut does not have the capacity to do a beer garden this summer in the Center this summer but are hopeful for 2023.
- The guy who did the September beer garden at Jason Russell house is looking for permanent space in Arlington but is also planning to return to the Jason Russell House lawn this September.
- Ali said there are no other projects the Town is doing with the State that could be put toward the Arts. The State has put a lot of money into Tourism and has suggested the Cultural Facilities Fund.
- Are there town events that could use funds toward an art component?
- The Shared Spaces program is the only possibility that could cover public art. They covered the parklet work. Ali wants businesses to take those on going forward. There are placemaking projects that get \$50,000 or less, such as a public art project with a traffic calming project or transportation related. They offer this grant three or four times a year.
<https://www.mass.gov/shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>
- Is there money from activating park use that could be put toward the arts? Ali says that is going to be a long play. That would take a warrant article, or showing up to a park and rec meeting. The best approach would be to come up with a program in collaboration with the park and rec commission.
- Are there any regulations that might be suspended that could limit busking? Ali says there are no limitations for outdoor gatherings.
- There have been over 100 applications for the ARPA funding. That will be spent in no time. Artists and art non-profits have all applied.
- What is the prognosis on COVID restrictions? Ali has not been involved in those conversations this time around. Boston announced their vaccine mandates for restaurants and gyms. Some businesses in Arlington already have those mandates and are interested. The other kinds of restrictions generally come from the State.

5) STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: How can we increase diversity in our volunteers and commission members

- Adria's Commissioner post will need to be filled
- A reminder to look at the strategic plan and the core values as we think about rounding out the Commission's membership and recruiting for volunteer members.
- We can start with participants in Chanel's project. We are still building our relationships with them. The project is still at the beginning.
- We are looking for more community engagement opportunities.
- Think about the Grants Committee pool.
- Would like to attract someone who has a community presence but not necessarily from the arts, like a business person.

- Maybe a real estate person
- Without Adria, we will be missing the artist's vision and spark and contacts from the field. What does arts and culture do that other organizations don't? We need to be able to offer that spark of imagination. Adria has been able to convince all sorts of people to support and appreciate the arts.
- We need someone with connections outside of town and with regional or State level contacts, and contacts in Greater Boston arts circles. This connects to our sustainability goal and enable us to go after larger funding sources or participate in broader projects, like Art Week.
- Someone involved in non-traditional art forms
- In answer to the question of how inauthentic this process is getting when we talk about recruiting diverse people: should we go organically through people we know, or try to reach beyond our circles? Some suggested it could be a long-term goal, but others talked about being very intentional about who we are reaching out to with an understanding of the importance of diversity to our work.
- Maybe we should look at artforms that are done primarily by people of color.
- Make some direct calls to the ICA or other organizations who may know artists
- Relationships and trust is important. We need to build those relationships comprehensively through marketing, outreach, etc.
- The personal ask is very effective
- Should we talk with Adrian Gill?
- There is value in having people who don't necessarily live in town. They only need to work here.
- We should include a wording of our core value on diversity right in the flyer and include a line that people of all backgrounds are welcome to apply
- Include testimonials from all the Commissioners about the value of working with the Commission.
- There will be another ARPA opportunity coming soon possibly in February or March. Another 750K focused on sustainability, making changes in businesses that will be more long lasting, i.e. a bigger kitchen space, a transportation vehicle, an air filtration system. Think big. There is no cap on the request. It won't be used for a town wide project.

6) **NEW BUSINESS**

- Annual report is drafted. Please review and let Stewart know of any omissions. Must be in by Monday morning.
- We are anticipating the Fin Comm meeting. We need new testimonial letters.

Meeting adjourned 8:31 pm

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Marlin-Curiel

Next meeting: February 3, 7pm